

From fried food to good health: Lifestyle management member commits to change



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A LIFESTYLE MANAGEMENT STORY

When Tom Selvaggio learned that his company was offering an incentive for its employees to take a health risk assessment (HRA), he agreed to the deal. Having grown up in an Italian family with a history of diabetes, Tom was aware that he might be at risk, too. He also was experiencing a great deal of stress at work due to long hours and frequent travel. This unhealthy combination caused Tom to rethink things.

After Tom reviewed his HRA results, he wasn't completely surprised. Although his blood pressure had always been that of a teenager, Tom's current numbers, as well as his weight, were a bit high at 140/90 and 206 pounds, respectively. He didn't necessarily want to lose a lot of weight (he just had bought several new suits), but Tom was determined to better manage his stress levels and diet to try to "square away" his blood pressure. And with a military background, he knew he was disciplined enough to do it.

To help him achieve his goals, Nationwide Better HealthSM lifestyle health coach Lisa Willcox gave Tom a call. Tom's company, NYSE EuronextSM, partners with Nationwide Better Health to offer its employees a variety of health and disease management services. Lisa was prepared to work with Tom based upon her training and the results of his HRA.

Tom agreed to work with Lisa for one year in the company's telephonic lifestyle health coaching program. They began focusing on ways he could better manage stress and then transitioned their phone conversations into discussions about his diet and nutritional habits. Tom was hooked, especially on the flexibility of the program and Lisa's approach. "Lisa is very good at giving encouragement. She always has a cheerful voice and offers great suggestions for doing things differently," says Tom.

With the information Lisa had given him, Tom began to make small changes to his diet and eating habits, including learning how to read and understand food labels. He also stopped salting his food and started incorporating more salad, chicken and lentils in his daily menu. By adding exercise, Tom – and others – soon noticed results. "I used to live by the saying, 'If it's not fried, it's not good.' Now I'm eating so much better my pants are falling off!"

In addition to his health coach and program, Tom attributes a lot of his success to the support of his girlfriend and son. "With my girlfriend's interest in preparing healthier meals, and my son's encouragement to buy that used Bowflex machine, I'm making the strides I was hoping to make." More than half-way through the program, Tom is well on his way to reaching his goals: he has lost approximately 18 pounds and lowered his blood pressure to 126/79.

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